



Buzzwords ...

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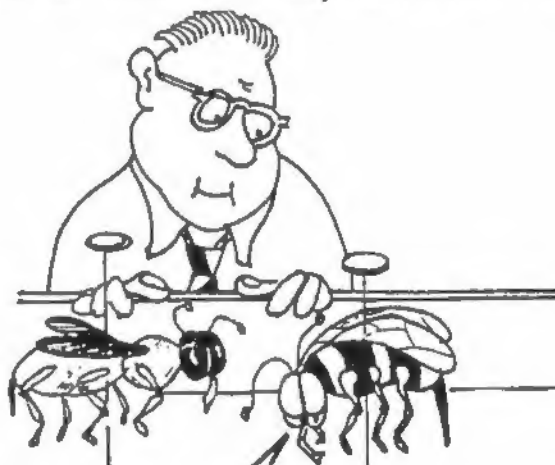
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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

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"This is the last time I go to an acupuncturist with my back problems."

A STEP FORWARD FOR THE NBA

It was pleasing to receive unanimous support from branch delegates at this year's annual conference for the executive remit recommending the appointment of a management support officer to the national executive.

We would now like to hear from suitable applicants for such a position, and a notice requesting an expression of interest in the appointment appears in this issue of *Buzzwords*.

At this stage executive are seeking applicants from within the beekeeping industry, as we feel that a suitable appointee could be found in this way. However, if the response isn't adequate, we will extend the search more widely.

If you consider yourself qualified for this job, or know of someone either within or outside the industry who might be, then we would like to hear from you as soon as possible. Contact the executive secretary in Wellington or an executive member for further details.

This is an important step for the NBA to improve our effectiveness as an organisation representing the beekeeping industry. With major changes ahead, and the strong possibility of involving every New Zealand beekeeper in the NBA through disease control funding, it is extremely important that we provide ourselves with the best available management structure that our resources will allow.

Allen McCaw
NBA President

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT OFFICER

The NBA intends to appoint a part-time Management Support Officer to assist the national executive perform its functions for the members of the association and the beekeeping industry in New Zealand.

Duties will consist mainly of working closely with the executive in implementing the approved plans and policies of the NBA. The appointee will be expected to keep abreast of new developments affecting the association, and assist executive in responding to them.

We are looking for a person with a reasonable knowledge of the beekeeping industry, and the ability to relate to a wide range of people. An essential requirement is for effective written and oral communication skills, ideally a sense of humour, self motivation and determination.

The appointee will be employed under contract for an average of two to three days per week, and need to have access to some secretarial and communication services.

Anyone interested in this position should write to the NBA executive secretary outlining qualifications and suitability, and asking for a detailed job description and contract conditions.

Contact:
Executive secretary NBA
PO Box 4048
Wellington

Phone (04) 728 102
Fax (04) 712 882

NBA executive

OBITUARY

We note with regret the death on Sunday 20 August, after a long illness, of the well-known and highly-respected beekeeper and NBA life member Harry Cloake of Timaru.

There will be very few beekeepers in the country who do not have some memories of Harry, as his was a long and distinguished involvement in our industry.

From a beginning of two hundred or so hives which he took over from his father, through hard work and dedication Harry built up Cloakes Honey Ltd into one of the largest and most successful beekeeping businesses in the country. The Timaru operation has continued under the guidance of his son Mervyn, and it was with considerable pride that Harry talked of the recent involvement of two of his grandsons in the family business.

Always mindful of the political process Harry took an active part in the administration of the industry, serving as NBA president for three years, active on the HMA, and latterly as a founder director of the New Zealand Honey Producers Cooperative.

The high regard in which he was held was exemplified by

the gathering of a large number of beekeepers from all parts of the South Island at his funeral in Timaru on Tuesday 22 August.

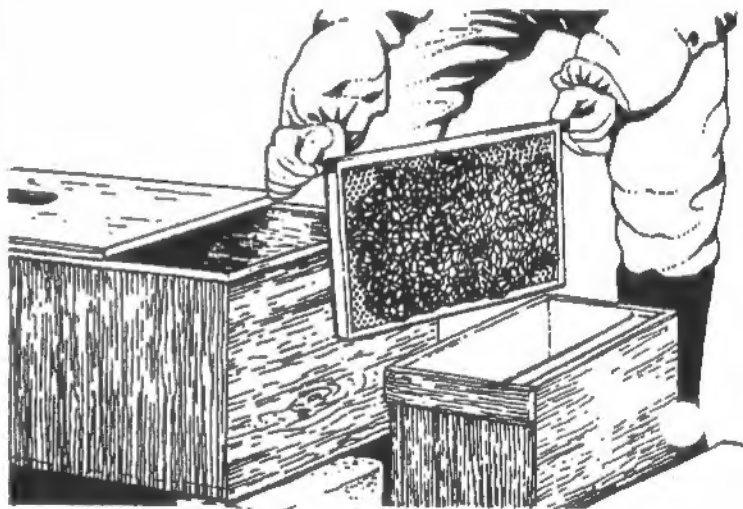
We extend sincere condolences and good wishes to Mrs Cloake and the Cloake family. It has been a privilege to have known Harry over the years, and his memory and influence will prevail in the history of the beekeeping industry in New Zealand.

Allen McCaw
NBA President

NBA DIARY

Here's an idea for your next **branch social** - a fine of 20 cents is levied every time the word "bee" is spoken. One group trying this found that branch funds were boosted by at least a dollar per head, and they scored a more fun evening as well.

Hawkes Bay will have their spring field day on Saturday 16 September, at Dobson's Bee Farm, Kereru. Another meeting you can book in your diary now is on Tuesday 10 October showing of "The monk and the honey bee", a new video about Brother Adam's expeditions in search of bees. There's also a diseasathon on Saturday 4 November and the final meeting on 14 November.



News of these events comes from *Buzzsheet*, a very readable newsletter put out regularly by Jenny Dobson for the Hawkes Bay branch. *Buzzsheet* was the source of Ted Roberts' article on planning, which we ran in the July *Buzzwords*.

Bay of Plenty branch are repeating their successful Young Beekeeper of the Year competition. This is a great way of encouraging young beekeepers coming into the industry. They're looking for nominations of beekeepers who are no more than 30 years old and have at least 50 hives, or are somehow involved in the industry (such as employed in commercial beekeeping).

The competition involves visits by a panel of judges this spring, and attendance at a dinner in June 1990. It's open to the **Waikato** and **Poverty Bay** branches too. Entry is free and the winner can win some significant prizes, as well as the recognition of the beekeeping industry.

PROTEIN DIETS

Want to guarantee hive build-up this spring? Worried about the effects of another lousy October? And how about getting hives ready for cyanamide-treated orchards?

You need to give thought to the protein supply your bees will have this spring, especially if they're in an area where pollen is short or if bad weather stops them flying.

The current recommendation for a protein supplement is:

lactalbumin 12.5 kg
yeast 25 kg
sugar 70 kg
water to make patties (about 17 l)

This mix provides 23% protein, the same as in a typical mixture of bee-collected pollen. The cost of the final mix is \$2.08/kg, or \$1 per patty.

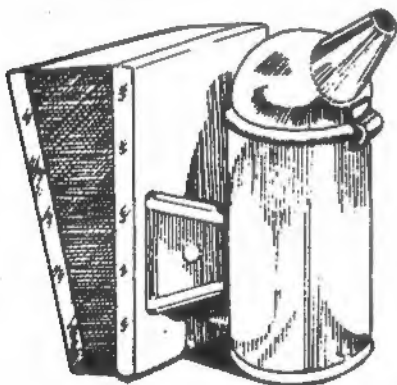
I know of the following sources for the materials:

Lactalbumin. Use Alatal 560, available from the Dairy Board at \$6.40/kg ex store. For the name of your nearest supplier ring Alaco toll free on (04) 723 630.

Occasionally a lower-grade supply of Alatal 560, still suitable for bee feed, is available at \$5.80.

Yeast. The sort to use is inactive, unsalted, roller-dried yeast. One source is Fermentation Industries, PO Box 3974, Auckland, phone (09) 764 049, fax (09) 764 144. Their product is \$5.09/kg in 10 kg bags, freight free on orders of over \$95. Fermentation Industries are also at PO Box 2945, Christchurch.

MAF apiculture unit



OTHER PRODUCTS

Diversification was one of the topics at the Dunedin conference seminar, and royal jelly and bee venom are a couple of the options.

The NBA has learned of two possible contacts for people dealing in these products.

* Royal jelly is being sought by a distributor in Australia with clients in Asia and the USA. Contact Mark Carter, Manager of Nature's Grove, PO Box 57, Crows Nest, NSW 2065. Phone (02) 436 0422 or fax (02) 439 2157.

* A venom collection device is being marketed by a beekeeper-inventor in Portugal. Contact Alberto A. B. Nobre, Rua Nova do Castelo 12, Messejana, 7600 Aljustrel, Portugal (B Alentejo). Phone number, if you've got an interpreter handy, is (084) 65 134.

THAT US PRICE SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Most of you know that the US price support programme for honey has a very direct effect on your business. The price you receive for honey is influenced by the workings of this programme, yet few beekeepers understand exactly how it works.

Why is it called a loan programme, when all it does is buy honey from beekeepers? Why is it worth more to American beekeepers to store their honey in a shed than it is to sell it on the open market? And why has the whole thing suddenly changed to affect beekeepers in this country?

To understand how this programme works it's worth looking at a little of its history. The US Federal Government has supported the honey industry since the early 1950s, when a federal honey support programme was established.

The stated purpose of this programme is to provide for the maintenance of adequate honey bee colonies for pollinating important crops.

Until 1980, this is how the programme worked. Beekeepers could take a loan based on the price support rate for extracted honey that was stored either at the beekeeper's property or in a warehouse. The point of this loan was to give the farmer cash for the crop, without the beekeeper having to sell the crop immediately.

Beekeepers could continue to store the crop until they thought the price was right to sell. Beekeepers could always cancel their loan should the market price not rise above the support price. If they did that, they would have to deliver to the appropriate authority, honey of value equal to the value of the loan at the end of the year.

The programme appeared to work successfully until 1981, when the support price was above the domestic honey price for the first time in several years. Once this happened, beekeepers started forfeiting on their loans. That means they lent the honey to the support programme and got paid, but by defaulting on their loan they kept the money and the support programme kept the honey.

The support programme, which is administered by a body called the CCC (Commodity Credit Corporation), began to end up with increasing stocks of honey. This was held in storage until it could be distributed through Government-sponsored programmes.

Compounding this problem was the fact that imported honey was cheaper than the domestic price and the support price, so packers found it more profitable to purchase the imported product.

If you're interested, or know someone who might be, contact the coordinator of the competition: Bruce Stanley, RD1, Whakatane, phone (076) 29 028.

Canterbury branch's spring field day is on Sunday 1 October, at Bruce McCusker's place near Hawarden. For details contact Warren Hantz on (03) 243 962.

Northland is having its next branch meeting on Friday 8 September. It's at MAF Keyte Street in Whangarei, at 7.30 pm.

Marlborough dates coming up. Wednesday 6 September - hear the wandering Welshman Ted Roberts speak (in English, but he sings in Welsh). Ballinger Centre, Budge Street, 7.30pm. Wednesday 13 September, 1pm at the Fruited building. Mark Goodwin is speaking on kiwifruit pollination and wasps. Cost \$5. Sunday 15 October - spring management field day, midday on the West Coast road.

BUZZING STATESIDE

Official - almost! New Zealand bees should be on their way to the USA next shipping season.

The US Department of Agriculture advised our embassy in Washington on 1 August that the required change in their legislation should be made soon. "We have given the New Zealand honey bee amendment a high priority and hope to have necessary processing finished by the end of this year", wrote an official of the USDA.

Buzzwords has brought you updates on the saga of getting access. It's taken a lot of effort by MAF and Foreign Affairs, with support from the beekeeping industry, to gain this access.
MAF apiculture unit

YES MINISTER ...

Quotable quotes from Mike Moore at this year's NBA conference:

- * I'll do anything for you except legislate or give you money.
- * All I've heard about you is true. You compete with each other overseas and cut each other's throats on the local market - but you're a great bunch to be with.
- * If I lose my seat I'll become a consultant and charge you \$100,000 for my advice. Then you'd listen to me.

BEEKEEPING TOURS

Air New Zealand (that's Your Airline) is organising tours of New Zealand for the Alberta Beekeepers' Association. They want to arrange an airline/rental car package, and give clients a selection of farm stay accommodation and beekeepers to visit.

If you're interested contact Steve Cowan, Area Sales Manager, Air New Zealand, PO Box 10110, Pacific Centre, Vancouver, BC V7Y1C6, Canada.

ISRAELI STUDENT WORKERS

Two beekeeping students from Israel are looking for work with New Zealand beekeepers this summer. They come with recommendations from Professor Lensky of the Bee Research Unit at Rehovot.

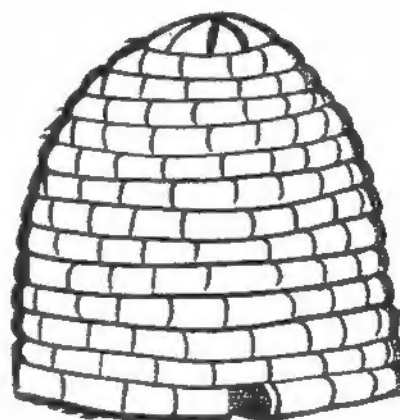
The students are looking for work for two or three months from November, and could work for several businesses during that time. Apparently they're mid-twenties, hard working, and have recently completed their beekeeping degrees. They've also done their military service, and could bring their own AK-47s if you're finding competition for honey sites a bit tough.

For further information contact Trevor Bryant at (075) 736 160 (work) or (075) 736 885 (home).

INSPECTION BEES

MAF is organising inspection days or diseasesathons this spring, using beekeeper volunteers. Waikato will be having its blitz on 7 October, and Bay of Plenty on 9 September. Both events will be followed by socials. Marlborough are having theirs on Saturday 23 September.

Inspection days are a great way of concentrating effort on AFB control. They're good PR for the industry and a lot of fun. Contact your MAF AAO if your branch is keen to do one.



SUGAR PRICES

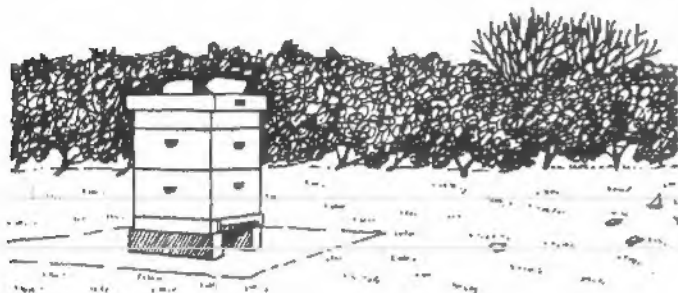
More on the sugar prices reported in last month's *Buzzwords*.

- * Those of you buying liquid sugar should look closely at the relative economics of doing this and buying dry sugar.
- * Prices have climbed recently on the world market, to 14 cents US/lb (\$NZ550/tonne at 0.56). This happened largely because the Soviet Union bought a mere 400,000 tonnes (gulp!) from China, rather than from its traditional supplier Cuba. Seems the Caribbean state wants some hard cash after years of swapping sugar for gumboots and Ladas.

Pundits are seeing a slow rise in world prices, to 15c US (\$NZ590/tonne) by the end of our winter, and possibly to 20c US (\$NZ786/tonne) by the end of the year.

The difference between the support price and the domestic price increased through the early 1980s, so the CCC found more and more beekeepers defaulting on their loans. Because of this the Reagan administration began to get very interested in phasing out the price support programme. They argued that it was not necessary to guarantee an adequate supply of honey bees for crop pollination.

Despite these indications, the programme was continued but the level of support was reviewed. The average support rate in 1985 was 65.3 cents per pound, in 1986 it dropped to 64.0 cents per pound, and in 1987 it dropped by a further cent. The support price will continue to decrease by 5% until 1990, when a new farm bill will be under consideration by Congress.



In addition to the decreasing level of honey support rates, the new 1985 Act included a buy-back option. This allows a honey producer to turn the honey in under the loan, and then buy it back at the price support rate or at a lower rate determined by the Government (effectively a direct subsidy). In fact, these buy-back rates are set to reflect world market conditions. In practice, the rates have been far lower than the average honey support price.

This means that beekeepers who participate in the programme are able to sell the honey they buy back, and CCC is able to reduce its stock level. The CCC does not incur the cost of storage, processing and transporting the honey crop, and the honey goes back into the market without the CCC giving it away.

The first buy-back rates were announced in the summer of 1986. These ranged from 52 cents per pound for white honey down to 37.5 cents per pound for amber honey. These rates of course were considerably less than the average 1986 support price of 64 cents per pound, but they were still above the average price of imported honey that year, which was 35.5 cents per pound.

Because it appeared that the buy-back rates did not reflect the current world market condition, the rates were changed several times during 1986 and 1987. The buy-back rate announced in October 1987 for that year's crop ranged from 40 cents per pound for white honey down to 34 cents per pound for amber honey. Once again, these buy-back rates are considerably less than the 63 cents per pound honey support rate.

It's fairly easy to understand the impact of implementing the honey buy-back programme on the US honey industry.

It has been quite profitable for beekeepers to turn the honey in under loan, buy back the honey at the lower buy-back rate, and then market that same honey through conventional channels. The result has been a reduction in the acquisition of honey by the CCC from around 53,000 tonnes in 1985 to only 18,000 tonnes in 1986.

The level of US honey imports has also dropped dramatically as domestic packers and processors purchase domestic honey rather than the imported honey. In 1986 the US imported 59,000 tonnes, but in 1987 only 30,000 tonnes.

As US honey becomes more competitive on the world market, there has been an increase in the quantity of honey exported. The 8,200 tonnes of honey exported in 1987 was more than twice the 3,300 tonnes exported in 1986.

The honey buy-back programme has been and continues to be attractive for the US industry, because it allows for a transition period in the honey support programme. The changes the buy-back programme have brought to the honey industry are quite evident. Several beekeepers still participate in the federal honey programme, but beekeepers are buying back their honey and marketing it themselves. This means that the acquisition of honey by the CCC has fallen, and the stocks held by this body have decreased.

US processors and packers have found domestic honey to be more competitive. As a result the demand for imported honey has decreased so much that honey imports are near the levels of the 1970s. US exports of honey have expanded as its competitiveness on the world market has increased. Analysts in the US say that if the federal buy-back programme continues, the US honey industry will be in much better shape in the future than it has been in several years.

Information from Gleanings in Bee Culture

JAPANESE MARKET HAS POTENTIAL

The Japanese honey market is the most competitive in the world, but with the right approach and a high-quality product, niches can be found.

That's according to Sue Walker, a Palmerston North beekeeper and manager of Honeyland New Zealand, speaking at the NBA conference in Dunedin.

Initial studies by Sue indicated tremendous potential for a high-quality product in the important Japanese gift market.

In 1984, Honeyland New Zealand was established and a dream started to become reality.

She became aware of the advantages New Zealand had in Japan. We were also a nation of islands, she said, and the image which so many people had was of a clean, green natural country with an anti-nuclear policy.

Everyone in Japan seemed to treat New Zealand with respect. By comparison, people in the United States did not know or care where New Zealand was.

Giving gifts was a traditional part of the Japanese lifestyle.

It was a ritual which was observed twice a year (almost like two Christmases every year), there were gifts following trips, even within Japan, and gifts were offered as gestures of thanks.

But the gift market was specialised and sensitive. The gifts were generally small in size, looked good and were of a high quality.

An expensive appearance and assured quality were more important than price as the Japanese were very wealthy. The fact that the prices of land and houses being so high forced many Japanese to live in small areas, often rented, also increased the amount of disposable income.

Sue Walker said that in most instances it was the "lady of the house" who bought the gifts. This meant there had to be a special feminine appeal.

Living in confined areas meant buying in small amounts. Honey also had an appeal as a health product.

Even when all these special requirements were fulfilled, exporters still found they had to conform to Japanese edict. There were no short cuts.

"The Japanese put a lot of emphasis on the personal relationship, which once established develops into trust. I found that speaking their language gave me an added dimension. They were genuinely delighted to find I had gone to university to learn their language and culture."

But even getting through to speak to the right people meant either having friends in high places or working through an organisation which the Japanese regarded as prestigious. The New Zealand Trade Commission was a good place to start from.

"I found that even in the most delicate marketing mission the bulk of the time was spent discussing what some would call irrelevant issues.

"The business side might only take a few minutes at the end of the discussion, but this was part of the personal relationship and trust which was so important to Japanese."

Adapted from the Otago Daily Times

LAST SEASON AT A GLANCE

The beekeeping industry contracted for the first time in decades, and unit honey production was the lowest for at least 19 years. On the positive side, honey prices rose to sensible levels again and disease incidence dropped a little.

That's the picture in MAF apiculture unit's annual report, presented to the NBA conference by the unit's manager Murray Reid.

Beekeeper numbers are down 7% overall: 7.5% in the hobbyist sector and 2% in commercial numbers. Much of this is the result of more diligent purging of the registers, as well as hobbyist beekeeping declining a little in popularity.

Hive numbers are also down 1.6% overall: 5% among hobbyists and 1.1% among commercial operators.

The honey crop at 5752 tonnes was the lowest since 1983 (5052 tonnes), but the average of 17.4 kg per hive is the lowest for at least 19 years (my records only go back to 1970).

AFB levels were 5.6% of apiaries and 1.1% of hives, compared with 5.5% and 1.4% respectively the previous season.

Queen bee exports were up 34% from last year (at 40,075), but package exports declined 8% (to 9,458 x 1 kg).

MAF apiculture unit

REVIEW OF BEE LEGISLATION UNDERWAY

MAF is reviewing the Apiaries Act. The review forms part of an overall strategy of taking a wide variety of legislation sharing a large proportion of common purposes, powers and procedures, and grouping them into three main acts. It is intended to bring provisions currently covered by the Apiaries Act within either the Agricultural Security Act or the Primary Products Act.

A Ministry of Agriculture discussion document addressing possible change to legislation surround the bee industry says there are a number of risks that need to be managed.

A review of the Apiaries Act 1969 says any drafted legislation must include provisions for protecting the New Zealand industry against foreign diseases and pests. Legislation must be able to take appropriate action if a foreign bee disease is discovered, says the document. The discussion document also covers areas such as consumer protection and market access for bee products.

MAF Report

To err is human, to forgive is divine - unfortunately association policy precludes either.

BUZZWORDS IS ...

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The views expressed in *Buzzwords* are not necessarily those of the National Beekeepers' Association nor of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.